

Record

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Baptist parcels crucial to earthquake relief

ARMENIA, Colombia (BP) — Over a small open fire, Diana Geraldo stoops to stir the plantain (a banana-like fruit) as it boils in a smoke-stained pot. Her tattered clothes and the makeshift shelter give stark testimony to her desperate situation. Her three adult children, all mentally retarded, watch with anticipation as she prepares the morning meal.

An earthquake just 10 days earlier, measuring 6.0 on the Richter scale, destroyed their home along with thousands of

others. With more than 1,000 people killed and hundreds missing, life in Armenia, Colombia, would never be the same.

Search-and-rescue teams converged on this mountain city from all over the world to sift through the piles of rubble that were once the homes of many of Armenia's citizens. For days following the quake, specially trained dogs led rescuers to those trapped beneath the ruins. Even now, debris clutters the streets as soldiers stand by with weapons ready to prevent looting. Heavy machinery has moved in to finish the demolition process with all hope lost for any more survivors.

Diana counts herself blessed that she and her family escaped serious injury. However, now comes the struggle for daily survival. She and her three children share their wood and plastic shanty with another family of four. When asked about her diet, she shares how plantain is the breakfast meal. She then explains, "In the afternoons, we fix soup by putting together whatever we have, and that is what we eat."

In the face of such tragedy, one would expect

to find Diana clutched in the throngs of despair. However, her smile and her joy defy all human logic. Diana is a Christian and a member of the Gethsemane Baptist Church. The church stands just across the street from the small city park that Diana and 240 other people must call home for now.

The church building is badly damaged and will have to be destroyed. Until then, what is left of the building serves as a distribution center for emergency food packets.

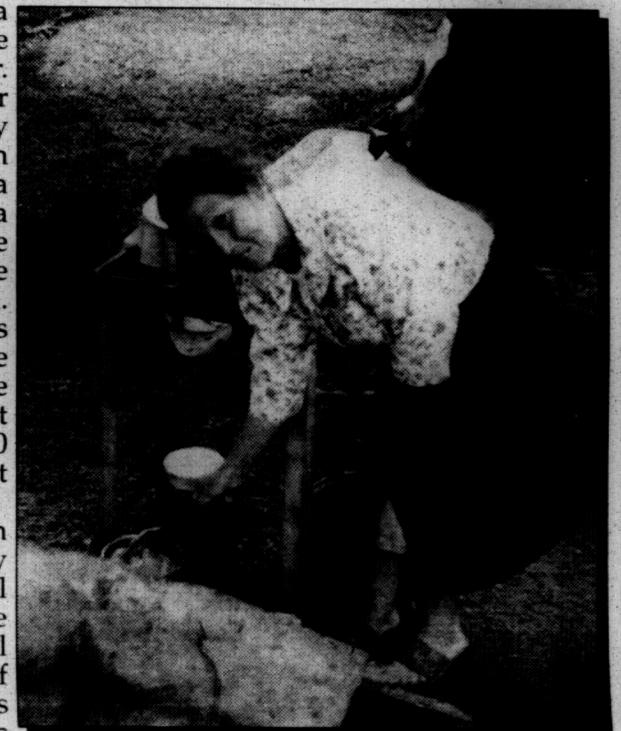
As a truck arrives with another load of food, volunteers line up to help unload. A soldier stands by to guard against looters with his M16 perched on his hip.

Thanks to the commitment of Gethsemane's members, and help from the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund, food parcels are being shared with many quake victims.

When asked what the food has meant to her and her family, Diana unequivocally states, "The help is very special. It is all that is keeping us alive."

"Without it, we would not be here."

Clutching her frail hands to



TIGHT QUARTERS — Diana Geraldo cooks plantain, a banana-like fruit, over an open fire in a small city park in Armenia, Colombia. She and several others share a small makeshift shanty. Of the food she has received from Southern Baptists, she said, "It is all that is keeping us alive." (BR special photo)

her heart, she declared, "We are very thankful to the people who sent the food. I know they have done it because they love the Lord and because they love people."

Gifts for Southern Baptists' Colombia earthquake relief efforts can be designated for Colombia relief/World Hunger Fund and mailed to the SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty, 901 Commerce St., Suite 550, Nashville, TN 37203.

Telephone inquiries can be made to (615) 244-2495.



AID ARRIVES — With armed soldiers standing nearby to prevent looting, a truck is unloaded with emergency food aid at the Gethsemane Baptist Church in Armenia, Colombia. (BR special photo)

ISC to begin recruiting effort

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Scott Chafee, a Southern Baptist missionary to Zambia, has been selected to help enlist recruits for the International Mission Board's (IMB) journeyman and International Service Corps (ISC) programs.

Chafee and his wife, Kim, have served as missionaries to Zambia since 1993.

As a consultant on the ISC/journeyman team in the board's office of mission personnel, Chafee will work with Southern Baptist campus ministers to recruit students for the programs. He also will help with missions conferences and interview people interested in serving in one of the programs.

The International Service Corps program is open to individuals at least 21 years of age willing to serve four to 24 months to meet priority needs overseas. The journeyman program is available for single college graduates under 30 years of age willing to commit to two years of overseas service.

Prior to missionary appointment, Chafee worked with youth, students, and singles at churches in Birmingham, Ala., and Chesapeake, Va. He served as a student worker and seminary instructor during his time in Zambia.

"With the continued growth of the International Service Corps and journeyman programs, Scott is joining the team at a crucial time," said Glenn Prescott, who directs the two programs at the IMB. "His combination of overseas experience and student ministry background will serve us well as he works toward mobilizing today's 'Gen-X' student population."

The number of two-year ISC and journeyman missionaries sent out by the board jumped 54.9% to 547 in 1998.

For information about the ISC or journeyman programs, call (800) 789-4693 or e-mail Chafee directly at scott.chafee@imb.org.

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

NOBTS lists courses

3

VIM Day observed

4

Racism addressed

5

Letters to the Editor

7

Looking back

10 years ago

Bill McCreary is the the new Director of Missions for Benton and Tippah Associations. He moved from the pastorate of Kilmichael Church, Kilmichael, where he had served since 1982. He attended Clarke College, Mississippi College, and New Orleans Seminary.

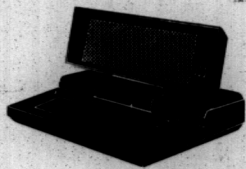
20 years ago

New officers for the Fellowship of Mississippi Evangelists include James Fancher, Jackson, president; Sonny Adkins, New Hebron, vice-president; Don Moore, Aberdeen, vice-president; Myrna Loy Hedgepeth, Jackson, secretary; and Tommy Hudson, Oak Forest Church, Jackson, pastor-advisor.

50 years ago

First Church, Natchez announces plans and specifications for a large, brick annex that would double the size of the present facility, adding 40 classrooms, three assembly halls, a chapel, Sunday School offices, a work room, and three nurseries. W.A. Sullivan is pastor.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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Perkins Jr.**
Editor

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The mystery of the little white Bible

Madalyn Murray O'Hair's worldly possessions went on the auction block Jan. 23 in Pflugerville, Texas — sold to satisfy \$250,000 in federal tax liens and other debts. It was a somber footnote to a life dedicated to ending all religious influence in America.

Most people are aware that O'Hair, the avowed atheist who served as a plaintiff in the lawsuit that removed officially-sanctioned prayers from public schools in 1963, has not been seen since September 1995.

Much speculation centers on O'Hair's whereabouts. She vanished along with one of her sons, Jon Garth Murray, and a granddaughter, Robin Murray O'Hair. If she is still alive, Madalyn Murray O'Hair is nearing 80 years of age.

Authorities know that shortly after the trio's disappearance, \$500,000 was withdrawn from a San Antonio bank account maintained by American Atheists, the Austin, Texas-based organization that served as the springboard for O'Hair's anti-religion activities.

Her 1985 Porsche automobile was found abandoned at the Austin airport. Some people believe the trio are in New Zealand, because of connections they have there.

The O'Hair auction included some interesting items, including the Porsche and several two-dollar bills with "In God We Trust" crossed through. There were also the liquor bottle collection and souvenirs of her worldwide travels on behalf of atheism.

However, the most interesting — if not downright intriguing — of O'Hair's auctioned possessions had to be the white children's Bible inscribed with the following:

Presented to Mrs. Madelyn (sic) Murray O'Hair by the 12-year-old girls class at Winnetka Heights Baptist Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Dec. 15, 1968.

It was the only Bible among the hundreds of books auctioned that day. It was the only Bible known to be in the possession of the world's most famous atheist.

Why in the world would Madalyn Murray O'Hair hide away this one Bible, to

be discovered in such an extraordinary way all these years later?

In a Jan. 27 article, Baptist Press editor Art Toalston set out to trace the history of the little white Bible. He tracked down Jane Elliott, a member of that long-ago girls Sunday School class who still attends Winnetka Heights Church.

Elliott remembered how her now-deceased Sunday School teacher, Kit Oldfather, explained the significance of the U.S. Supreme Court's prayer ruling five years earlier, and how O'Hair as the plaintiff was responsible for the ruling.

Then Oldfather did something extraordinary. "We really need to remember this lady in prayer," Elliott recounted Oldfather telling the girls. The idea of sending the Bible followed soon after the prayers.

The Sunday School class never got a response from O'Hair, Elliott recalled, but did the little white Bible have an impact on O'Hair's life?

It's a mystery why a heart-hardened person like O'Hair would choose to keep a three-decades-old book for which she professed no importance.

Could it be because the girls and their teacher followed the Christian model of praying for our enemies (Matt. 5:43-44)? Could it be because they understood the importance of love in our relationships with non-Christians (1 Cor. 13:1-13)?

Michael R. Stick, who recently became pastor of Winnetka Heights Church, put it this way: "Through the actions of a godly teacher and a group of young girls, God

"DON'T BE AFRAID — IT'S JUST THE CHURCH. THAT'S BIBLE TALK FOR 'HOME'!"



showed Mrs. O'Hair the very things she despised — his mercy, love, and grace.

"It doesn't matter how insignificant our efforts seem to others, God uses all that for his purpose."

"We can hope Mrs. O'Hair read this little Bible, but we'll never know this side of eternity the full effect of their evangelistic effort."

May the mystery of Madalyn Murray O'Hair's little white Bible compel us to pray more, witness more, and — above all — love more.

PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL



The longest walk.

By Dean Register, president
Mississippi Baptist Convention

Call me sentimental. Tell me I'm a soft touch. Accuse me of being a teddy bear when it comes to my children. I represent the accusation and I wear it as a badge of honor.

Bob Carlisle's "Butterfly Kisses" stirs a place deep within my heart. The enormously popular song extols the shining moments of a pilgrimage between a dad and a daughter.

The first time I heard it, I was driving to church. Tears welled up and I tried to blink real fast so no one would see me crying. It was no use. The lyrics, like an arrow to the heart, punctured my macho defenses and I literally wept.

Now with only a few days before my own daughter's wedding, I find myself chasing memories of the beautiful girl who stole her daddy's heart 23 years ago.

On that June morning at Baptist Hospital in New Orleans, I told everyone who would listen that I was a dad and that I had a little girl. Some people stared at me. Most just politely smiled at my exuber-

ance. Their response didn't affect my elation.

The years rolled by. She began to stretch her wings. Secretly, I wondered if I would always be her hero. I hoped my example would show her how she deserved to be treated by boys. I knew, too, that one day she would introduce me to the one with whom she wanted to spend the rest of her life.

Well, that day has arrived. He is an incredible young man with a great heart for God! It is time for me to step aside. I've performed hundreds of weddings. This one will be much different.

Church aisles look longer

now. This just might be my longest walk since I joined her mother at the altar almost 27 years ago.

Could it be that the toughest question directed at a dad is, "Who gives this woman to this man?" It's like asking if you think a beautiful Stradivarius violin would be a good gift for a gorilla.

No! I'll never "give" her away. I'll "present" her to be the bride of her chosen groom. I'll present her with a full heart and thousands of memories.

Memories of bed time stories and good night kisses; of first grade coloring books and third grade lunch boxes; of Deacon,

her beagle, and Skippy, her duck.

Memories of walking through snow-shrouded woods in North Carolina and playing on sun-drenched beaches in Florida; of rehearsing endless piano notes and practicing softball; of stormy nights when she would bring pillows and blankets into our bedroom and sleep contently on the floor.

I'll cherish memories of laughter and lamentation, of prayer and share times, of homecomings and homegoings.

On her wedding day I will stand in awe of her serenity and poise. I'll release her to the wonderful plan of her Heavenly Father.

She'll probably squeeze my hand and whisper "Daddy, don't cry. Be strong for me, okay?"

I'll try. No doubt I'll struggle against a tide of tears, but tears are language God understands. After all, he knows dads and daughters better than anyone.

Register is pastor of Temple Church, Hattiesburg.

Courses to be offered in Mississippi by NOBTS

March 29 begins the last of eight courses at five locations in Mississippi sponsored by New Orleans Seminary, New Orleans (NOBTS).

The total eight courses are: Song Leading; Worship Planning; Reading Music;

Rhythm/Pitch; Reading Music; Harmony/Melody; Hymnology; Music Administration/Staff Relations; Survey of Music Resources; Class Voice.

These courses are designed to provide basic training for bivocational music directors and

other music leaders in churches.

The eight courses meet two hours per week. Each course is eight weeks in length.

The cycle of courses is scheduled over a two-year period. Each course is independent and has no prerequisite. Each student who completes the eight courses

earns a Church Music Certificate from New Orleans Seminary plus a credit of eight hours toward an on-campus degree program. There is a one-time registration fee of \$25. The cost of each course is \$75.

The seventh course "Class Voice" will meet once a week for two hours for eight consecutive weeks at the following locations and times:

- Broadmoor Church, Jackson — beginning March 29 (7-9 p.m.) Jimmy

McCaleb, teacher.

- First Church, Columbus — beginning April 1 (7-9 p.m.) Ed Nix, teacher.

- First Church, Purvis — beginning March 29 (6:30-8:30 p.m.) James Hayes, teacher.

- First Church, Booneville — beginning March 29 (7-9 p.m.) LuAnne Ford, teacher.

- Northcrest Church, Meridian — beginning March 29 (6:30-8:30 p.m.) Buddy McElroy, teacher.

These classes could be offered at other locations in the state also, where 10-12 students are interested in enrolling.

For more information, contact Jimmy McCaleb, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205. Telephone: 1-800-748-1651 or in the Jackson area 968-3800, ext. 273.

Romanian Christians featured

Daniel Botica, a young minister from Bucharest, Romania, and student at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, is the featured speaker at the annual Romanian/American Missions (RAM) banquet at First Church, Brandon on Feb. 26 at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$12 per person.

Also, Doina Ameriei, a Romanian school teacher who is visiting the U.S., will share her testimony. Ameriei is old enough to remember conditions before the 1989 revolution.

RAM was formed three years ago to coordinate efforts to build churches in the northeastern area of Romania, a former communist-ruled country of 23 million people. RAM has sponsored seven Romanian churches. Sandy Hook Church, Sandy Hook, is currently constructing a church building in Voluntari, Romania, just outside of the capital city of Bucharest.

Information will be given about the mission trip scheduled for June 24 - July 6. Any and all skills are needed, but there is a special need for medical and children's workers.

For more information contact Wayne Ball at (601) 825-3365 or (601) 825-7011.



Botica



THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

THE BAPTIST
Record

Lottie totals setting records across state

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Mississippi Baptists may be heading for another record year of giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions (LMCO) — if churches like First Church, Madison, are indicators.

As a matter of fact, if First Church, Madison, was an LMCO barometer, another measurement scale would have to be invented.

First Church, Madison, pastor John Temple and Glenn Holder, the church's business administrator, recently presented a check for \$200,000 in LMCO gifts to Jim Futral, executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB).

Considering the churchwide LMCO

goal was set at a lofty \$46,000, that's not too shabby to say the least. Indeed, it's nearly 435% above the churchwide goal.

How did they do it?

Temple said the church leadership made a decision that the goal would be pushed not as a corporate goal but as individual goals for each member of the church.

"We encouraged each member to give as much to Jesus as anyone else on their Christmas gift list. We didn't talk about the churchwide goal; we talked about individual responsibility," Temple said.

According to Temple, the church's Woman's Missionary Union group, charged with promoting LMCO, came up with a number of unusual and innovative ways to keep the offering on the minds of church members.

"They did a good job of missions emphasis. They mobilized us to think more of our part in the offering," he said.

The church's LMCO gifts are even more extraordinary in light of the many other financial demands on members' pocketbooks right now.

The church just completed an education facility building project, and is in the midst of beginning another building project.

First Church, Madison, apparently is not the only Mississippi church setting new LMCO records.

First Church, Jackson, a perennial LMCO leader in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), also exceeded its record offering goal of \$258,000.

Each Sunday during the December 1998 emphasis, the church's goal was kept before church members by placing puzzle pieces on a large puzzle board consisting of photographs of Mississippi missionaries stationed around the world.

Such emphases add to the heart Mississippi Baptists already have for missions around the world.

In 1997 — the last year for which complete LMCO records are available — Mississippi Baptists led the SBC in three of the four major categories measured by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB):

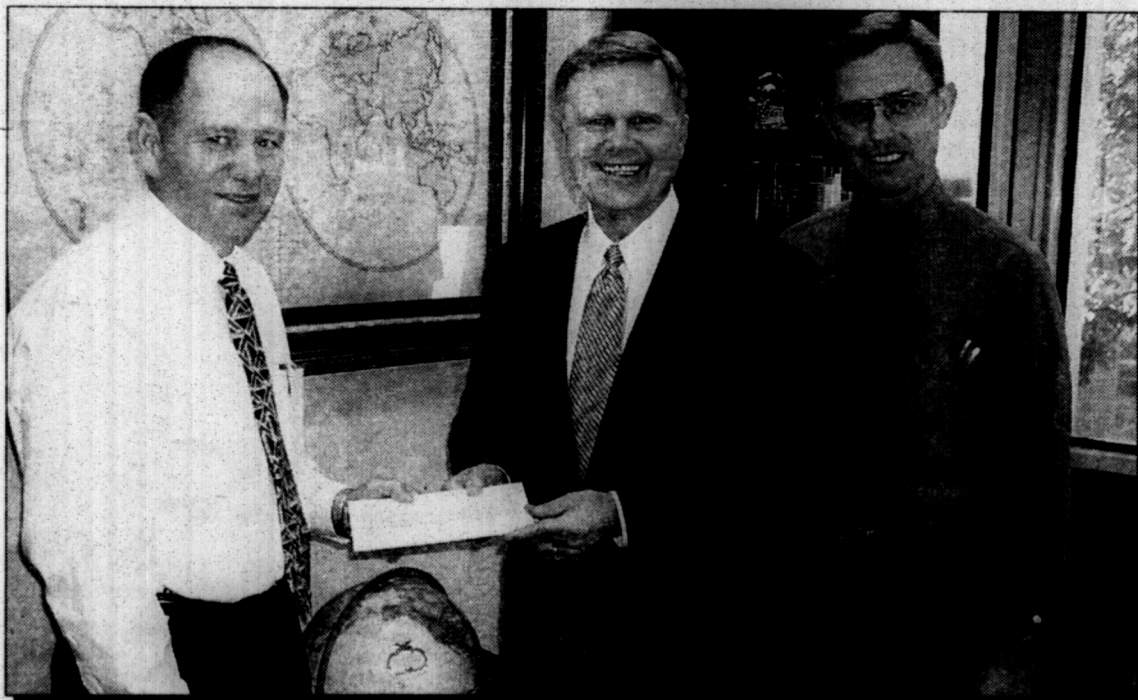
- ◆ Per capita giving: \$16.07
- ◆ Dollar increase over previous year: \$3,190,047
- ◆ Percentage increase over previous year: 39.86%

In the fourth category, Mississippi placed second behind Texas in total dollars given.

1998's LMCO totals are due to be released by IMB later this Spring.

Will First Church, Madison, be able to repeat its extraordinary feat? Pastor Temple believes they can.

"Next year, we're going to go over this year's success, and throw down the challenge for the new year. We can do it," he said.



OVER THE TOP — Glenn Holder (left), business administrator at First Church, Madison, presents a check for \$200,000 in gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions (LMCO) to Jim Futral (center), executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Looking on is John Temple, pastor of First Church, Madison. The church joins a long list of Mississippi churches meeting or exceeding their 1998 LMCO goals, but First Church, Madison, topped their goal by almost 435%. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

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1998 Lottie Moon
Christmas Offering for



Did your church meet or exceed its LMCO goal? The Baptist Record wants to know! Please send us your church's goal and the amount by which the goal was exceeded (if any). A list will be published in a future edition of the newspaper. Send the information to Editor, The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: missrecord@aol.com. No telephone calls, please.

Parents learn to cope with homosexuality

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

Joint choirs to perform 'Make Us One'

The Celebration Choir of Northcrest Church, Meridian, and the adult choir of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, Meridian, will join together to present the Dove Award-winning musical "Make Us One," at 7 p.m. on Feb. 28 at Northcrest Church. Special guest will be Babbie Mason, Christian recording artist who along with David T. Clydsdale created "Make Us One." Mason and Tony Jarman, former tenor with Phil Cross and Poet Voices, will be the worship leaders for the evening. Mason will also be in concert during both the 9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. worship services Feb. 28 at Northcrest Church. For more information, call Northcrest Church at (601) 482-3498.

It all began when a church friend stopped Jane Doe in a store and said, "We're praying for you and your family." Jane was taken aback, because she wasn't aware of the friend's genuine concern.

It turned out Jane's son had called the friend's daughter to tell her that he was in the homosexual lifestyle.

That was May 1998. In the months since then, Jane and John Doe (the names of the people involved have been withheld for reasons of privacy) have searched for God's help and guidance.

"When we first learned of our son's chosen lifestyle I made the comment that nothing good could come from this. It is our family policy to find the good in any situation we face, because we have learned that where good can be found, there also is the Lord," John said.

Now, however, something good is indeed emerging. A Love in Action seminar is to be held Feb. 26-27 at First Church, Louisville, the home church of the Does.

"The seminar is for parents, grandparents, ministers, and everyone else who wants to know more about how the church can respond to homosexuality," Jane said.

It will be led by the staff of Colorado-based Love in Action ministry and will include the

testimony of a former homosexual man and lesbian woman, plus the testimony of a couple who took care of their son as he died of AIDS.

The seminar begins 7 p.m. on Feb. 26, and again at 8:30 a.m. on Feb. 27. The seminar concludes at 5 p.m. For more information contact First Church, Louisville, at (601) 773-6246.

After hearing the shocking news from her church friend, Jane went straight to her husband, who called their son and asked three questions: Are you gay? Are you sure? Did you call these people and tell them this?

The answer to all three questions was "Yes." They drove that evening to his apartment to find out more.

"We were devastated," John said. "Numb. You heard him say it, but you didn't want to believe it. At first you think it is just a phase. Give it awhile and he will get over it," he said.

"We didn't understand homosexuality," Jane added. "It is not just a phase. He had changed, displaying flamboyant mannerisms we had never seen before."

"We started asking questions and he would answer. We were not educated about this. It was embarrassing," John said.

"Our son is a Christian. He told us he is still God's child, but he said he was not in God's will. Later he started saying God made him this way," Jane said.

Their son had been a leader in the youth group of their

church. He spent a summer doing mission work, and struggled for a while with whether or not God was calling him into the ministry, Jane indicated.

"He was the kind of youth that other young people came to for spiritual help," she said. "Now, he is just the opposite."

As a mother, Jane felt an immense need to try and "fix" her son.

"You go back over everything in his life, from when he was a baby and on, believing there must be something you did, something you can fix," she said.

She began calling everywhere trying to find out information so she could fix the problem.

Her calling led to the discovery of a Love in Action-sponsored support group meeting on Wednesday evening at Bellevue Church, Cordova, Tenn.

"From the support group, we learned how to deal with things, and we learned about what was to come," John said.

They immediately learned that the first goal of a homosexual is to try and "conform" his family into accepting his lifestyle as normal.

"All ten families involved in the support group said the same things happened to them. He would come home. He knew exactly what buttons to push in us, upsetting us," John said. The goal was conforming them.

"The support group focuses on conformity. We can either conform to the Holy Spirit's leadership in our lives, or we can conform to Satan's lies and deceptions," Jane said.

The support group also indicated that the Does would experience a predictable pattern of behavior from their son, much like that of a drug addict or an alcoholic:

- Financial troubles. "He was spending all his money and would spend all of ours if allowed," John said.

- Compulsive lying. "Five of every 10 words out of his mouth would be a lie," Jane said.

- Multiple sex partners. Jane said the literature they read indicated that a male homosexual may have hundreds of partners in a year, while a female lesbian may have only two or three partners in a lifetime.

- Compulsion to stay in contact with homosexual friends and lovers. "When he would visit, every 20-30 minutes he would be on the phone calling someone," Jane said.

- Revising family history. "He told me

one day, 'All mothers of gay men know their sons are gay.' I told him that he could take one mother off that list because I never had any idea he was gay, but after being told this over and over again, some mothers just give in and accept it as fact. They conform," Jane said.

- Argumentative. "He can be very convincing. He never stops trying to conform us. He even gave us a book that says gay people are created this way by God," Jane said.

- Other addictions, like drugs and alcohol, are often involved.

- Defused personal boundaries. "From our support group we learned tough love and how to hold to personal boundaries."

"You also learn how not to feel guilty all the time. You learn how to not give in to thinking that if I just go along this time maybe it will bring him back," John said.

- Shocking behavior and plans, often said just for the shock effect. "Like the first time he told us he was going to marry his lover — we would have been shocked, but we were ready for this because of our support group," John said.

- Severed relationships and blaming. "When you don't conform, then they get very angry, sever the relationship, and blame you."

"At first, he would come home, sometimes two or three times a week. Now he hardly comes at all," John said.

When their son learned they were attending the support group, he even started to belittle them about that.

"Our support group let us know how to deal with all of this. We invited him to go to counseling and we all went for one session, but he wouldn't go back. 'You need counseling. I don't,' was his response."

"I told him I had been (to counseling) and would go again if he would, but he said no."

"I realized that what was happening to our son was just what the Bible says — he exchanged the truth for a lie," Jane said.

The Does have struggled with their son's choice to enter the gay lifestyle. Yet, they feel it has actually strengthened their relationship with each other and with God.

They hope that out of the First Church, Louisville, seminar, similar support groups will be started around the state.

"The support group can be a safe haven for those who are struggling with this issue. We have acknowledged God in all of this. It is nothing we have done. We are two little grains of salt in the sea, but God uses us."

"We hope and pray our son will one day hit low enough to decide he no longer wants to be in the lifestyle," John said.

"I believe when you pray and ask God for help, God answers," Jane said.

Celebrate Volunteer Missions Day on Feb. 29

By Jim Didlake, director
MBCB Brotherhood Department

February 29 is a special day set aside for Southern Baptists to celebrate the contributions volunteers make to mission endeavors in Mississippi, the United States, and around the world. Each year our state will send thousands of volunteers from its churches to share the message of Christ. There is no way to measure the impact of men, women, and youth as they move to touch the world's needs through evangelism, construction, disaster response, medical assistance, backyard Bible clubs, and numerous other areas of ministry.

Each year our office receives numerous requests from sister states for our volunteers to assist their needs. Their requests always state that Mississippi provides the top volunteers in the Southern Baptist Convention. The reason for this is the heart for missions our volunteers have. Even though Mississippi has one of the smallest populations, our state has been a leader in sending volunteers into the field.

Who are these men and women who go to serve? They are farmers, construction workers, doctors, nurses, businessmen, housewives, and ministers who freely give of their time, pay their own way, and live in whatever is available to be able to be involved in short term missions. After such a sacrifice, they return home to tell others that they received far more from this experience than anything they could ever give. That spirit is what makes volunteerism such a passionate ministry.

Many times I am asked, "Are volunteers really impacting ministry?" I recall an example several



Didlake

years ago from construction work in California. Church groups from our state had been a part of the construction of 100 churches. This involvement led to a savings of over \$10,000,000. Next, consider World Changers, where youth in our state alone have worked to repair over 200 homes, helping low income families be more comfortable and able to take pride in what they have. In one house alone, a group enabled one family to experience something that they never had — for the first time, a mother and her children would be able to spend a rainy night in their home without getting wet from leaks.

Disaster Relief is yet another area of volunteer ministries. A greater effort has not been found among our people than the outpouring of love from the people of Honduras as our people gave and volunteers handled the approximately 1,250,000 pounds of food. In addition, monies were given that will allow our volunteers to build at least 87 houses for families that lost everything. Already, reports have come in that two new churches are beginning for the ministry.

As you can see, we have much to celebrate this year. My prayer is that you will take this opportunity to recognize and offer to join these important volunteers as well as support them as they challenge others to become involved. If we truly desire to reach Mississippi and our world, volunteers will be the key to carrying out our goal.

Love

Is an Adventure . . .
Be a Missions Volunteer



VOLUNTEERS IN
MISSIONS SUNDAY
February 28, 1999

SBC task force: racism still serious problem

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Racism remains a serious problem within the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and across the United States, in the view of SBC Racial Reconciliation Task Force members.

"We have far too many people dealing with the race issue from the minority community; it is the majority community we have to convince," said Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission and chair of the task force. He called for the white community "to confront racism."

"There is more residual racism in the white community than whites know," Land said, adding, "There is more good will in the white community than the black community knows."

Yet Land said during a Jan. 27 meeting of the Racial Reconciliation Task Force he was surprised and disappointed with the lack of progress in race relations.

Considering the judicial and legislative

remedies offered to improve civil rights in the years between 1954 and 1967, Land said it is tragic that in 1999 more progress had not been made in America.

"This is an issue we need to push Southern Baptists and Americans on, because it is right, because it is moral. It is a part of the ministry of reconciliation God calls us to and because our future as a nation depends on it," he said.

The Racial Reconciliation Task Force is a panel established in 1996 by the SBC Great Commission Council, formerly the Inter-Agency Council, in response to the adoption of a resolution on racial reconciliation by race messengers to the 1995 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Atlanta. The task force is composed of SBC agency executives or their representatives.

From the 1940s-1995 the Southern Baptist Convention accepted more than a score of resolutions condemning racism, but never apologized for it, Land explained.



BROTHERS IN CHRIST — Race Relations Sunday was observed across the Southern Baptist Convention on Feb. 14. The SBC Racial Reconciliation Task Force is calling for increased emphasis in racial reconciliation in the denomination.

BHS garners 'most wired' recognition

Jackson-based Baptist Health Systems, Inc. (BHS), has been named one of the nation's "100 Most Wired Hospitals," by the publishers of Hospitals and Health Networks magazine. The magazine recognized BHS for its efforts to utilize technology to improve patient care and better serve constituents.

Over the past four years, BHS has devoted more than 53,000 man-hours to modernizing information systems, including the installation of fiber-optic cable and digital data circuits, replacement of core operational systems, and development of a number of new strategic systems, according to information supplied by BHS.

"There are more than 6,000 hospitals and health systems in the U.S. Being selected... is a coup for BHS and all of Mississippi. It is a direct reflection of our efforts to improve patient care," said Rick Caldwell, BHS chief information officer.

BHS is affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

WHEN LIFE IS FOGGY

In January there was a pile-up on the bridges that cross the spillway of Lake Ponchartrain near New Orleans. It began early in the morning on the span that brings the eastbound traffic to work in New Orleans. The fog had rolled in and reduced visibility to just a few feet.

Then there was a wreck — and another, and another, and another, as the cars kept piling up on top of each other. On the other bridge span the traffic traveling west toward Baton Rouge became aware of the wrecks nearby and in the fog, as people tried to drive and see at the same time, another wreck occurred and then a second pile-up began.

All in all, ninety-something trucks and cars crashed and both bridges were closed for over nine hours as rescue vehicles carried people to the hospital and wreckers tried to separate cars and carry them either to be repaired or to their final resting place in the junk yard.

Miraculously no one was killed and almost as miraculously only 20-something people were injured. On the news following the pile-ups, instructions were given repeatedly for how to drive in the fog — put your lights on low beam; slow down but do not stop; if you are just unable to drive, do not stop on the side of the road, but find an exit and get off the road completely. Good information, but too late to help over 90 drivers. They either did not know or did not pay attention.

All of us have days when life gets "foggy." You cannot see what is ahead and you wonder



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

what is around you and you wonder where the sun has gone. It is not unusual in our spiritual journey and in our church life to have those "foggy" experiences. If you are not careful you can crash.

The instructions given for driving a car could be heeded when you come to those cloud-covered moments. For instance, it is important to keep what light you do have focused right in front of you. You do not need high beams which see way down the road — but you do need, as best you can, to concentrate on the light shining on what is just before you. Keep your eyes fixed directly ahead.

It is certainly important to not stop. That may be our tendency but it is not wise. How many times have you seen someone come to a "foggy" moment in church and simply throw up their hands and quit — just stop in the road. The problem it creates is that those around you do not know what to do and they may run over you. I suppose that the word from Scripture might be the words of the Apostle Paul, "Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord forasmuch as ye know that your

labor is not in vain in the Lord." Don't quit! But then, moving through

life's fog all of us must remember that conditions change. The fog will lift and the sun will shine again. 'Til then it is a word of wisdom for all of us, that we must not doubt in the darkness what God has shown us in the light.

In those times when you cannot see into the future, do the one thing you can do — look to the Lord! He will guide you through the fog.

Australian Baptists affirm meeting

WASHINGTON (BP) — Australian Baptists support the decision of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) not to postpone the 18th Baptist World Congress in early January 2000 because of possible Y2K computer problems, according to a report from the BWA.

Geoff Holland, editor of the Victorian Baptist Witness, said the Y2K fear that airplane computer systems will not handle the change from 1999 to 2000 is especially unfounded when it comes to Qantas, the official airline for the BWA congress, Jan. 5-9 in Melbourne.

Holland reported Qantas, "which has never killed a passenger in 79 years flying," began work on the Y2K problem in 1995 and by the end of 1998 had converted all of its critical systems to Y2K compliance. It is now testing them to make sure the airline is completely ready for the transition, Holland said, noting other major airlines are similarly prepared.

Leon Norsworthy, head of the local arrangements committee and a former senior executive with the Civil Aviation Authority in Australia, agreed. He told Holland he has "checked with several major airlines and they have assured him they are prepared for the change of century."

Norsworthy said, "Australia's leaders are taking the issue very seriously and are employing strategies to remove the risk the 'bug' might pose to services, industry and commerce. Already systems — financial, tax and others —

are working into 2000 without a hitch."

Holland quoted Pete Holzmann, global coordinator for the AD2000 Interactive Task Force who has "three decades of experience on mainframe computers, PCs and embedded systems." He said while there will be minor inconveniences, "few of us will encounter a major problem."

A recent report from the World Bank in The Washington Post provided similar information: 21 developing countries have taken remedial steps on the Y2K computer problem, 54 countries had made national policy decisions on the issue and 33 reported "high to medium awareness" of the problem but were taking no action. Sixty-two countries have requested grants to help them with solutions.

Yet Holzmann said he is sure "the power grids will not shut down, the financial markets will not crash and airplanes will continue to fly. God is still in command: the tides will rise and fall, the sun and moon will maintain their course and God's gift to mankind of intelligence and creativity will once again allow us to cooperatively solve issues that surface in the early hours of Jan. 1, 2000."

The BWA Internet site — www.bwanet.org — includes registration forms for the congress and other information. Other inquiries can be made to the BWA at 6733 Curran Street, McLean, VA 22101-6005; telephone, (703) 790-8980; fax, (703) 893-5160; or e-mail, Congress@bwanet.org.

NAMES IN THE NEWS



Temple Church, Pascagoula, recently licensed Randy Carney to the ministry. Pictured (from left) are Everett Childers, pastor; Carney, minister of music and education; and Dennis Magee, chairman of deacons.

Jad Khalaf was ordained on Jan. 24 at West McComb Church, McComb. He has been called into World-Wide Evangelism and is available for preaching, youth rallies, and revivals. Khalaf may be contacted at (601) 684-5099 or 249-0491. Mike Pennock, pastor, is pictured with Khalaf.



Khalaf and Pennock

Cherry Creek Church, Pontotoc Association, licensed Joey Moody to the ministry on Jan. 24. Pictured (from left) are Don Wilson and Moody.



Wilson and Moody

Anthony Kay has retired as pastor of First Church, Calhoun City, after 21 years of service, effective Jan. 31. He will be available for pulpit supply, interim, and revivals. He may be contacted at P. O. Box 104, Calhoun City, MS 38916, or phone (601) 628-5075.

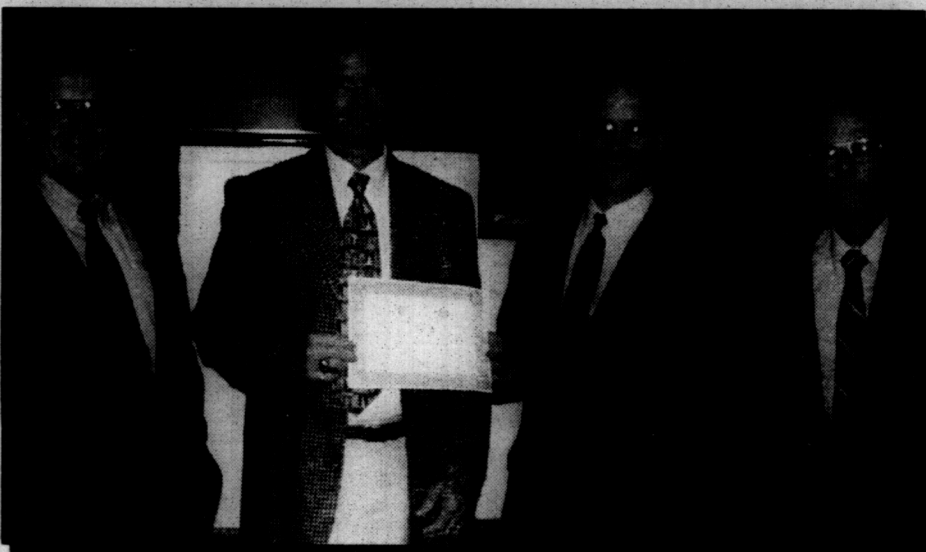
Perry Neal, former minister of activities at First Church, Biloxi, and pastor of First Church, Bay St. Louis, celebrated the beginning of his 25th year in evangelism in January. Neal can be contacted at 4418 Wares Ferry Road, Montgomery, AL 36109, or (334) 279-8710.

Ronnie Prevost, a graduate of Hazlehurst High School, Mississippi College, and New Orleans Seminary, has been named coordinator of special academic programs at Hardin-

Simmons University (HSU) in Abilene, Texas. Prevost, now a tenured professor of church ministry, joined the HSU faculty from Midwestern Seminary, Kansas City, Mo., where he was a visiting professor of religious education.



Sylva Rena Church, Water Valley, recently ordained Jack Biggers to the office of deacon. Pictured (from left) are David Sapp, pastor; Biggers; and James Hudson, chairman of deacons.



Jeff Jones, associate pastor of music and youth at Leesburg Church, Morton, was ordained to the ministry on Oct. 25. Pictured (from left) are Eddie Hamilton, director of missions, Metro Association; Tommy Massey, chairman of deacons; Jones; and Odell Thrash, assisting minister.

Lottie Moon goal reached

Terry's Creek Church, Magnolia, set its Lottie Moon Christmas offering goal for \$3,000. The church received a total of \$4,658.05. Kent Newell is pastor.



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1-601-924-1982

REVIVAL DATES

Holcomb (North Central): Sunday School revival; Feb. 28-March 3; Sunday services, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Noel Wright, Wright Track Ministries; Randy Ashley, pastor.

Friendship, McComb: March 5-7, Friday and Saturday, 7 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; evangelists are Barry Cutrer, Jayess, Friday; Pete Wilbanks, Osyka, Saturday; Charles Davis, McComb, Sunday morning; and Rick Kennedy, McComb,

Sunday evening; Phillip Alford, McComb, music; LaVerne Summerlin, pastor.

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(601) 977-9676

BEGINNING AGAIN

Life After Divorce and Death
A Recovery Workshop

Thursdays 7 p.m.- 9 p.m.
March 4 - April 22, 1999

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF JACKSON
431 NORTH STATE STREET
JACKSON, MS 39205

TOPICS

Recovery...How do I get started?
The Road to Forgiveness...What do I do with Anger?
Loneliness... Friend or Foe?
Children...How can we help them?
Small Group Night
Transitional Relationships... The quick fix?
Single Sexuality...What now?
Wholeness...Is it possible?

Also Available

Nursery/Childcare
KidShare for Children - Grades 3-6
Healing the Wounds for Teenagers - Grades 7 & up

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL:

Donna Lewis, Singles Assistant 949-1906
Linda Dale, Workshop Coordinator 373-9856

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

February 25, 1999

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Office of Communication.

WITNESSING



THROUGH MEDIA

WORKSHOPS

APRIL 16-17
RIDGECREST BC
MADISON

- **WOW! You're on the Air - Led by Tony Brooks**
Participants will learn basic audio. The first steps needed for operating a sound system (house or broadcast) for a local church. (one hour session)
- **NO! Your Other Left - Led by Don Moore**
"Nuts and bolts" of camera operation... participants will walk through the basic camera operations such as framing, functions and camera directions. (one hour session)
- **Creative Production - Led by Wayne Pierce**
Creating spots, outreach videos, devotional thoughts, VBS promotion, budget presentations and other productions for the local church. Examples will be shown. Share your samples...bring on VHS format.
- **OOPS, I'm the Director - Led by Don Moore**
Molding a group of volunteers into a team working together to present the Good News.
- **Getting Started in Media - Led by Chip Turner**
Using media to meet the needs of today's church through audio tapes and video for training, witnessing and evangelism.
- **Internet Ministry 101 - Led by Wes Pegues**
Come learn what you need to know about getting on line, surfing the Web and publishing a home page.
- **Sound Advice - Led by Tony Brooks and David Edmonds**
Participants will study audio for the sound operator. Question and answer format for those involved in working with sound in a local church television ministry.
- **Technology 2000 - Led by Glen McEwen**
Participants will receive help in looking at new technology such as projection television, computer/video presentations, image magnification, digital and other merging technology.

AWARDS BANQUET SPEAKER, DAVID CLARK



David is vice president of broadcast communications for the North American Mission Board, formerly the Radio and Television Commission. He also serves as president of FamilyNet—a commercial television network providing a variety of family oriented, Christian programming.

COST

Friday and Saturday cost is \$25 per person and does include all meals and conference materials. The cost is \$20 per person for churches bringing four or more persons for Friday and Saturday. **Advance registration is necessary.**

HOST CHURCH

Ridgecrest Baptist Church is located at 7469 Old Canton Road, Madison. Church phone is (601) 853-1090. Contact the Broadcast Services Department for any directions and hotel information you may need. **Meals** - Friday night banquet, Saturday breakfast and Saturday lunch - will be served at the church.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

• Training • Support • Recognition • Inspiration • Fellowship

CANCELLATION POLICY

Full refund prior to April 8, 1999. No refund after that date.

SPECIAL FEATURE

A variety of vendors will be available in our display area to show you equipment and answer any questions you have.

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For more info call 601-968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651
Broadcast Services Department



Christian Performing Arts Festival

with Church
Recreation and Youth
Leader Conferences

March 26-27, 1999
Morrison Heights
Baptist Church
Clinton • Cost \$20

For more information, contact
Discipleship & Family Ministry Department
(601)968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651

It is the purpose of the Christian Performing Arts Festival to showcase individuals and/or groups who use the performing arts to acknowledge the truth of the Gospel and to challenge and train individuals and groups to do the same. This year there will be conferences teaching basic and advanced skills in clowning, drama, puppets, and church recreation. Conferences are designed with youth and adults in mind.

Conferences

Drama:

- Acting (beginners and advanced)
- Directing (beginners and advanced)
- Illusions
- Choreography
- Technical Support
- Writing (beginners and advanced)

Youth Ministry

- Training Youth To Be Leaders

Church Recreation

- Fun and Games

Clowning:

- Clowning (beginners and advanced)
- Leading a Clown Troop
- Balloon Sculpting
- Clowning Skills

Puppets:

- Puppetry (beginners and advanced)
- Leading a Puppet Team (beginners and advanced)



YOUTH BIBLE STUDY FORUM

Saturday, March 6, 1999
Emmanuel Baptist Church,
Grenada, 8:30 - 11:30 a.m.

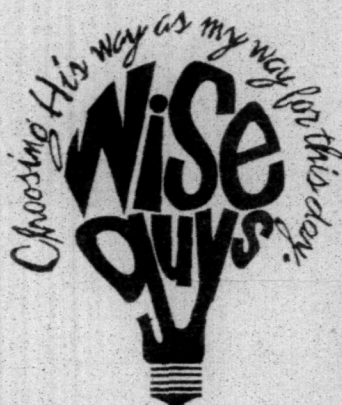
What are your youth saying about Sunday School? We want to hear from them!

Bring FOUR of your youth to this unique Forum and give them an opportunity to share. We hope you will bring a mixture of older youth and younger youth, and a mixture of male and female. Also, consider including two active youth and two who are only "fringe-ly" active. The reason for only four from each church has to do with our desired purpose. We want to generate meaningful, honest, open and "serious" discussion. The smaller the number, we feel, the easier this will be to accomplish.

There is no charge to participate in this Forum. However, we do ask that you pre-register with the Sunday School Department.

Call Mark Lott to get more information
(1-800-748-1651 or 968-3800, ext. 295)

A Study of Proverbs



Older Children's Retreat July 22-24
Gulfshore Baptist Assembly Pass Christian, Miss.

On this retreat we're going to learn:

Proverbs was written to help make us wise, not just so we'll be smart and know a lot, but so we'll know how to live and how to make right choices...choices that please God and help us get along with others.

This retreat is for those children who have completed grades 4-6.

Cost: \$76 Registration opens March 1, 1999.

Plan now to go to the Older Children's Retreat '99.

For registration information, please contact Gulfshore Baptist Assembly at 228-452-7261. For program information, call the Sunday School Department at 1-800-748-1651.

Reverence and respect for God is the beginning of wisdom.



Smaller Church Sunday School and Discipleship Training

Leadership Training Conferences

March 22, 1999 • 7-9 p.m.

First Baptist Church, Columbia

Morgantown Baptist Church, Natchez

The Sunday School Department and Discipleship and Family Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board have teamed up to provide this unique training event designed with the smaller church in mind. Each age group conference will provide an opportunity to learn more about teaching and learning styles of those involved in their area of ministry. This year we have one great conference in two outstanding locations. No registration is required.

For more information, contact
Sunday School Department & Discipleship and Family Ministry Department
P.O. Box 530 Jackson MS 39205, 1-800-748-1651 or 968-3800 local
www.mbc.org/ss

The following conference titles will be offered at these locations:

First Baptist Church, Columbia

- † Preschool Sunday School Leaders
- † Preschool Discipleship Training Leaders
- † Children Sunday School Leaders
- † Children Discipleship Training Leaders
- † Youth Sunday School Leaders
- † Youth Discipleship Training Leaders
- † Adult Sunday School Leaders
- † Adult Discipleship Training Leaders
- † General Officer Sunday School Leaders
- † General Officer Discipleship Training Leaders
- † Pastors

Morgantown Baptist Church, Natchez

- † Preschool Sunday School and Discipleship Training Leaders
- † Children Sunday School and Discipleship Training Leaders
- † Youth Sunday School and Discipleship Training Leaders
- † Adult Sunday School and Discipleship Training Leaders
- † General Officer Sunday School Leaders
- † General Officer Discipleship Training Leaders
- † Pastors

Family Life Conference

April 30 - May 1

Pearl River Baptist Assembly, Carriere

(exit 15, McNeill exit)



*Jim Chester, Slidell, La.
with music, magic, puppet
and humor*

Friday

7:00 p.m.

Family Rally with Jim Chester

9:00

Dismiss

Saturday

9:00 a.m.

Adult Rally (Children - TeamKID, Youth - Mini Centrifuge)

9:30

Break

10:00

Adult Conferences

- **Leading Family Ministries in the Church**, led by the author, Phil Waugh, Nashville
- **Marriage Enrichment**, led by Richard and Cheryl Shropshire, recording musician and marriage counselor, D'Iberville, MS
- **Single Parenting**, led by Phil Thurman, minister with singles, Temple BC, Hattiesburg
- **Current Issues Facing the Family**, led by Bill Hardin, pastor at First Baptist Church, Picayune

11:30

Dismiss

Cost:

\$2.00 per person or \$5 per church van;
lodging is \$5 per person or \$10 per family
(RV's for \$5)

Register:

Register by Wednesday, April 28 with children's name and age (Call 601-798-2372)

Note:

Family Week at Gulfshore Baptist Assembly with Jim Chester, July 5-9,
(Call Glen Shows 1-800-748-1651 or 601-968-3800)

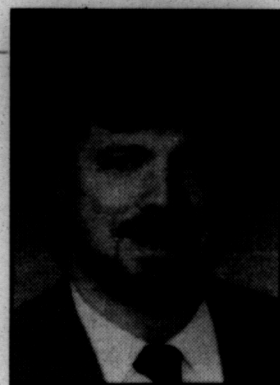
ELECTRONIC KEYBOARD WORKSHOP

MARCH 12, 1999
BAPTIST BUILDING, JACKSON
515 MISSISSIPPI STREET

TODD BILLINGSLEY
CLINICIAN



Sponsored by the
Church Music Department
L. Graham Smith, Director
Dot Pray, Contract Keyboard Consultant
Lew King, Specialist



Todd and his wife Missy live in Miami, Florida. Todd is a composer/arranger. His musical, **More Than Just a Story**, received a Dove Award nomination for "Best Musical of the Year" in 1995. He also arranged the popular piano/organ/synthesizer collection entitled **Two Plus One**. Todd served as conference pianist for Music Week at Ridgecrest in 1997. He is also the keyboardist for **Causeway**, a contemporary jazz group who appeared in this year's Super Bowl events in Miami. Todd has taught conferences at Ridgecrest, Glorieta, other conference centers and state conventions for the past 15 years.

Todd will be available for two one-hour private consultations on Thursday evening and four one-hour private consultations following the conference. The fee is \$30 per hour paid directly to Todd at the time of your session.

To schedule a time call Dot Pray at 1-800-748-1651, or in the Jackson area call 968-3800, ext. 272.

EXPANSION OF CONFERENCE TOPICS

- Participants will embark on a quick tour of ways MIDI can be utilized in Music Ministry.
- Using hands on experience, participants will learn how to set up tracks, record, and learn basic editing techniques.
- Participants will learn time saving tips like how to transpose music, converting recorded tracks into printed music, and how to make the computer follow the conductor.
- Participants will learn how to easily typeset music. Time-saving tips will be discussed such as how to input music by playing a keyboard, how to quickly orchestrate parts for various instrumentation, and how to transpose music.
- **Special Bonus!** Are you constantly on the look-out for that one special class that will drastically improve your keyboard bag of tricks? Well, here it is! Participants will learn easy tricks to spice up hymn accompanying. Learn extremely simple ways to create new harmonies without changing the basic chord. Or for the more adventurous, learn how to create totally new harmonizations for hymns. Then to top it all off, learn three easy modulations that will take you from one key to any other.

Pray this day for...

February 26 - March 11, 1999

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 968-3800, Ext. 3904 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-PRAY

"I have so much business I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer."

by Martin Luther

"God does nothing but in answer to prayer." by John Wesley

"Prayer-secret, fervent, believing prayer - lies at the root of all personal godliness."

by William Carey

Volunteers in Missions Sunday (Brotherhood Emph.). Missionaries Gene and Jane Roach write, "The Kakamega Bible School Committee has elected a new principal for the Bible school in Kakamega, Kenya. Please pray for this principal and the students as they work together to strengthen the churches through leadership training."

Week of Prayer for North American Missions (Home Missions) Larry Fisher, San Leandro, CA, is assoc. missionary for East Bay Baptist Association. Pray for the many things that are facing the association in 1999. Pray for Larry and others as they try to build a positive image in the San Francisco Bay area.

For Baptist Building Staff Planning Week (1-5). Some friends are seeking to introduce to the local television station in Tianjin, China, some top-quality animated pictures, which clearly present Christian virtues to the audience. Pray for God's guidance and for the opening of doors.

In Singapore a master's degree student in research physics has prayed to receive Christ, but because of his training in scientific deduction, he struggles with his need for tangible proof that Jesus is God's Son, or even that God exists. Ask the Lord to open his eyes to the truth.

Baptist representatives Ken and Martha Cooper, who are involved in English-language ministry in Munich, Germany, ask you to pray for three men whom Ken is discipling as ministers of the people.

Pray for a young man in Myanmar who came to Christ and went home to share his new faith with family and friends. When he took some new converts to the capital city to be baptized, he was arrested and jailed. As he began evangelizing the other inmates, he was released.

The Konkomba people who live in a village about two hours away from Baptist Medical Centre in Nalerigu, Ghana, have expressed a great interest in hearing the gospel and starting a church. Pray that someone will respond to the opportunity to share God's Word with these seekers.

Please pray for the "Pro-Missions Workshops" that will be held in Quito, Ecuador, during February and March. Missionaries serving on the newly formed Meracities Team write: "Pray that God will begin calling out church-planting teams from among our national brethren."

Jim Chevalier, Hagerstown, MD, is church planter pastor of Real Life Community Church. Pray for additional funding. The church, which is 11 months old, is losing some of its support and is not ready to be self-supporting. Pray about the need for musicians.

Tom Eggleston, Irmo, SC, is a national missionary. Pray for the new MissionsLive Team that started Jan. 2. The team will travel all over the country (churches, campuses, camps, conferences, and special events) using music and drama to focus on missions and evangelism. Pray that they will be effective witnesses for Christ.

Pray for the Love in Action Seminar Feb. 26-27 at First Baptist Church, Louisville, MS. This is for parents and loved ones in Mississippi who have or will find out that one of their family members was in the gay lifestyle. Pray that other support groups can be established throughout the state.

Mississippi Baptists have formed a three-year partnership with the Ukraine Baptist Union. Pray that many volunteers will participate in the eight mission projects in Ukraine during 1999. Pray also for our current partnerships with Maryland/Delaware and Honduras.

For Church Weekday Education Clinic, William Carey College, sponsored by Discipleship and Family Ministry. For State Youth Four Part Music Festival, Broadmoor BC, Jackson, sponsored by the Church Music Dept. For People Reach Expo, Jim Buck Ross Ag Museum, Jackson, sponsored by the Bible Study Team.

For Youth Bible Study Forum, Emanuel BC, Grenada, sponsored by the Sunday School Dept. Please pray for the effective planting and multiplication of house churches among the Hakkien of Taiwan.

Take a moment to send a card to encourage the children of our missionaries!

3-89 MISS ALICIA RACEY
Casilla 50-D, Temuco, CHILE
Parents: Michael & Annette, General Evangelism

4-83 MISS JENNIFER JOHNSTON
Caixa Postal 2053 Jockey, 64.049-970 Teresina, PI, BRAZIL
Parents: Vincent & Sharon Conference/Encampment

9-91 MR. JOHN CURTIS
B.P. 130, Tenkodogo, BURKINA FASO
Parents: Clifton & Cathy, Agriculture

15-81 MR. JOEL GLAZE, MR. SETH GLAZE
Bolanos 141, 1407 Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA
Parents: David & Gloria, Media Promotion

17-80 MR. JACOB WALLACE
William Carey College, 498 Tuscan Avenue, Hattiesburg, MS 39401-5499
Parents: Karl & Peggy Mission Administration
SERVE IN THE CARIBBEAN BASIN

19-80 MISS BETHANY PEVEYUU
Box 970, 1050 Union University Drive, Jackson, TN 39305
Parents: Frank, Jr. & Jerry Anne, Mission Administration
SERVE IN EASTERN AFRICA

21-82 MR. JOEL COLLINS
3326-E Farragut St., Miami, FL 33021
Parents: Charles & Suzanne, General Evangelism
SERVE IN THE CARIBBEAN BASIN

24-83 MR. JUSTIN A. MARTIN
9400 Goodman Road 2-A, Olive Branch, MS 38654
Parents: Asbury, Jr. & Hope, General Evangelism
SERVE IN WESTERN SOUTH AMERICA

24-90 MISS KIMBERLY CARLTON
Baptist Mission, P O Box 1559, Gaborone, BOTSWANA
Parents: David & Pamela, Theological Education by Exten.

28-87 MISS REBEKAH LAUREN RAY
Box 5502, 320005 Dnipetrovsk-5, UKRAINE
Parents: Mike & Linda, Religious Education Promotion

29-93 MR. CHRISTOPHER CARLTON
Baptist Mission, P O Box 1559, Gaborone, BOTSWANA
Parents: David & Pamela, Theological Education by Exten.

GA Mother/Daughter Overnight

March 19-20

Friday, 5 pm - Saturday, 2 pm

Grades 1-6

Cost \$23 per person

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HOUSE TOPS

'AUTONOMY' QUESTIONED

Editor:

In your Feb. 4 issue I read with genuine intrigue the concern expressed regarding "soul competency" of the local church in our SBC.

This term, taken from the "Report of Committee on Baptist Faith & Message," (BF&M) states in part and I quote: "Baptists emphasize the soul's competency before God, freedom in religion, and the priesthood of the believer. However, this emphasis should not be interpreted to mean that there is an absence of certain definite doctrines that Baptist believe, cherish, and with which they have been and are now closely identified."

We must not assume the "absence of certain definite doctrines" which each local church volunteering to wear the denomination's name is scripturally accountable to, as the BF&M states "the sole authority for faith and practice among Baptists in Jesus Christ whose will is revealed in the Holy Scriptures."

If a local church wishes not to subscribe to or live within these "certain definite doctrines" of Scripture which "Baptists believe and cherish," obviously no one is forcing them to be Southern Baptist, and that church is completely free to operate in whatever manner it wishes, whether independently or through other affiliation. However, the Southern Baptist Convention is

not obligated in such case to have its denominational name remain with that church.

Perhaps an even greater denominational concern for us today is that we have historically been so enamored with "autonomy" that the local church has perhaps become almost void of "accountability" to Scripture and/or the denomination for its beliefs and actions!

Stephen Forfer
Mize

ECUMENISM INVADING

Editor:

In your Feb. 4 issue I read with disbelief the article entitled "Can't Oust Church." I have been a pastor for over 30 years and to my knowledge, any association of churches can vote to dismiss any local church that practices any doctrine contrary to the doctrinal belief held by a Southern Baptist church that is a member of that particular association.

In this article it appears that the association is looked upon as some kind of board of directors rather than a group of churches that have united together to carry out the Great Commission of our Lord and support of each other.

Any church that wishes to become a part of an association of churches applies for membership, and after much investigation by selected individuals of

the association, the church is either recommended or presented reason why it cannot be recommended. Then the association of churches, usually during the annual associational meeting vote by messengers elected from each church to either accept or reject that church.

Likewise, if a church walks contrary to what they agreed to abide by when approved, this church may also be denied its continued membership in that association. It appears that ecumenism has invaded the ranks of the thinking of many and much of this is the result of the ecumenical organization called "Promise Keepers." There is a difference between eternal salvation and eternal membership in an association.

Charles S. Rodgers, pastor
Green Baptist Church
Oak Grove, La.

FOLLOW PROCESS

Editor:

In your Feb. 4 issue I read a letter commenting unfavorably concerning the ouster of a "charismatic" church from a Missouri association.

The New Testament emphasizes that the local church is a democratic body under the Lordship of Christ directing its own affairs. The New Testament church is a separate unit, exercising no authority over other churches and not being ruled by any other church or Christian body. But while independent, by common consent churches cooperate in matters of mutual concern, such as doctrine.

From the examples of the practices of the early churches the conclusion must be drawn that churches of like faith and order should work together in a spirit of voluntary cooperation within the framework of the New Testament polity.

Cooperation, and no coercion, is the principle by which churches are guided, and which they are bound together in fellowship and service. Of course,

there must be agreement in doctrine and practice, for "shall two walk together, except they have agreed?" (Amos 3:3).

The church at Corinth had a problem with "tongues speaking." Paul wrote a letter to the church to help correct the problem. Today, a constitution and by-laws provide churches and associations legal protection before the law and help them resolve complex problems. Churches of like faith and practice make up an association. If a church begins a practice which is foreign to Baptist polity, the by-laws of the association directs the action to be taken. There is a process of receiving a church into the association and a process of withdrawing fellowship.

Jim Burke
Waynesboro

RETURN TO KJV

Editor:

Baptists need to return to the basics and need to revere and accept "The King James Version (KJV) as the Word of God" not different translations. I realize the KJV was translated from Hebrew and/or Greek, but this Bible has been around since 1611.

If our ancestors, who did not have college degrees could understand the beautiful scripture — should not we? We must pray for God to open our hearts and minds when we read the Bible. Some of today's translations are designed to cause problems in the church. I know at times the KJV is hard to understand, but again prayer to God is the key for understanding.

What has happened to the Baptist Faith? There was a time when Baptists and other Protestant denominations recognized the office of the Pope in the Vatican for who he was, "the Antichrist." I cannot believe we compromise for coexistence. God give us men, women, and children to return to days when Christians stood for Jesus.

Ken Ellzy
Mendenhall

MS POSITIONS AVAILABLE

PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC: First Baptist Church of Fannin is searching to fill this part time position. A great opportunity near the reservoir. Send resumes to Search Committee, FBC of Fannin, 101 Church Rd., Brandon, MS 39047.

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A GROWING EVANGELICAL CHURCH is seeking a full-time youth/music minister. Housing provided. Send resume to: Philadelphia Baptist Church, 3646 Hwy 550 N.W., Wesson, MS 39191.

PART TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC, church located 15 miles East of Hattiesburg, MS. Send resume to Indian Springs Baptist Church, 185 Walter Myers Road, Petal, MS 39465.

A SMALL BUT DYNAMIC SBC CHURCH in the Raymond area is seeking someone who is Bi-vocational or a student to lead in the development of ministries in music, youth and children. Strong lay leadership will assist. The church has a wonderful and loving fellowship which is centered in strong Bible teaching. Please call: 857-3138 or 885-2002.

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WALTON COUNTY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION in Northwest Florida is seeking a Director of Missions for the Walton County Association, Defuniak Springs, FL. Please send resumes by March 8, 1999 to Rev. Mike McVay, Chairman DOM Search Committee, P.O. Box 2005, Red Bay, Florida, 32455.

SCOTLAND AND NORTHERN ENGLAND tour July 20- August 5. Englis Lake District, Yorkshire Dales, St. Andrews, Edinlugh. Details: Rev. Fred Griffie, 308 E. Clover St., Harlan, KY 40831-2310. Telephone (606) 573-9711.

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EXCITING, DYNAMIC YOUTH PASTOR looking for a full time position. Call, e mail or write for more information. Phone 228-769-6281, e mail shawndp@earthlink.com Shawn Panni, 809 Seacove, Pascagoula, MS 39581-2126.

BELLE CHASSE, LA - FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH: full time minister of music/youth; send resumes to: Search Committee, 8828 Hwy 23, Belle Chasse, La 70037.

CHURCH IS SEEKING a person to fill the full-time position of Minister of Childhood Education. Send resume to: Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 701 South Main Street, Jonesboro, AR 72401.

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Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

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King's Troupe of Blue Mountain College (BMC) shares the gospel through drama with short skits, monologues, and mimes. The students (pictured, from left) are Todd Browning, New Albany; Jessica Kolb, Saltillo; Paula Brown, Carriere; Alison Lansdell, Tupelo; Stephanie Tisdale, Memphis, Tenn.; Joy Greer, Bartlett, Tenn.; Christy Hardy, Saltillo; and Brad Ligon, Tupelo. For more information, call Tracy Moser or Julie Meeks, BMC BSU, at (601) 685-4771 ext. 137.

Larry Kennedy, president of William Carey College, recently crowned Jennifer Lynn Grafton of Ellisville as its 1999 homecoming queen. The court, elected by the student body, includes senior maids Katie Butler of Conway, Ark. and Jessica Rena Register of Laurel; junior maids Ashley Nicole Fitzhugh of Pine Grove, La. and Alison Amanda Trammell of Florence; sophomore maids Holly Deanna Norwood of Pehalatchie and Brooks Amber Revere of Covington, La.; freshman maids Tiffanie Nicole Cooper of Slidell, La. and Mandy Leigh Mozingo of Poplarville; and coast maids Stacey Collins of Harker Heights Texas, Alison Deming of Brandon, and Ktara Ealom of Oklahoma City, Okla.

Mississippi College (MC) Department of Music will present a recital by organist Jeff McLelland, and cellist Paul York, on March 2 at 7:30 p.m. in Provine Chapel. McLelland holds the rank of associate professor of music at MC. York is professor of Cello at the University of Southern Mississippi. Also, the MC Band, under the direction of John Hanbery, will present a concert in Swor Auditorium of Nelson Hall on March 1 at 8:15 p.m. A special part of the program will be the presentation of the George H. Mackie Award which is made annually to the most outstanding band member. For more information, call the office of public relations at (601) 925-3239.



Mary Elizabeth Ainsworth Edington received the Mississippi Woman's College Service Award at homecoming ceremonies held recently at William Carey College (WCC). Pictured with Edington is Milfred Valentine, dean of the Winters School of Music at WCC.



Open Vessels, Blue Mountain College

As part of **Mississippi College's Arts and Lectureship Series**, Tanea Stewart, actress, will perform a montage of poetry, song, and prose on March 2 at 6:45 p.m. in Swor Auditorium of Nelson Hall. Stewart is a native of Greenwood but has lived in Montgomery, Ala. since 1990. Stewart recently earned an NAACP Image Award nomination for her role in the film adaptation of John Grisham's "A Time to Kill." She is a tenured professor and director of Theatre Arts at Alabama State University.

Open Vessels, the clown team and the puppet team of Blue Mountain College (BMC), perform skits, monologues, and mimes. Members (pictured, from left) are Jessica Flannigan, Stewart; Ginger Homan, Pontotoc; Bridget Tutor, University; James Boler, Nesbit; Christy Campbell, Oxford; and Teresa Pullen, Horn Lake. For more information, contact Tracy Moser or Julie Meeks, BMC BSU, at (601) 685-4771 ext. 137.



Pictured (from left) during the dedication of the new Helen T. McWhorter Piano Lab located in the Thomas Fine Arts Building, William Carey College, are Milfred Valentine, dean of the Winters School of Music; Martin Cuellar, professor of piano; Helen McWhorter, and Maurice McWhorter. The dedication was part of the Homecoming '99 ceremonies. The lab is a state-of-the-art educational facility housing eight digital pianos.

William Carey College School of Music will present a series of concerts as part of its 1999 Guitar Concert Series March 2 through April 30 in the Lucile Parker Gallery of the Thomas Fine Arts Building. Performances will include Miroslav Loncar, assistant professor of guitar, and Natasa Klasinc, classical guitarist from Croatia, March 2 at 7 p.m.; Greek guitarist Eleftheria Kotzia, March 25; Yugoslavian clarinet player Darko Velichkovski with Loncar, April 12; and German classical guitar virtuoso, Gerd Wuestemann, April 30. For more information call (601) 582-6183.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD

A "Stop the Violence Rally," sponsored by Scott County Association WMU, was held on Jan. 9 at the Forest Community Center. Questions were submitted to a panel from an audience of 51 in relation to what can be done to stop violence in Scott County. For additional information call Rose Mary Montgomery, secretary, Scott County Association, at (601) 469-1951.

"Early Start to a Healthy

Heart" program, sponsored by Baptist Heart Services, is designed to place information about healthy heart habits into the hands of first graders in local schools. The schools are Madison Station Elementary, Madison; Walton Elementary, Jackson; Northwest Rankin Elementary, Brandon; Clinton Park Elementary, Clinton; and First Presbyterian Day School, Jackson. For more information call the Baptist Health Line at 1-800-948-6262.



Members of the BSU, Delta State University ensemble, Legacy, are (front row) Jason Brooks, director; Tabitha McKnight; and Julie Partian; (second row) Alicia Archer; Elisabeth Presley; and Chris Duvall; (third row) Steven Jones; Marci Hollingsworth; and Stephen Palmer. Not pictured: Katie Boren and Robert Jensen. For more information, contact Bill Kirkpatrick at (601) 843-2507.



Members of the Delta State University BSU ensemble, Trumpet Sound, are (front row) Dan Hendon, Ellen Anglin, Kelly Dean, and Mary Ann Davis; (second row) Jason Arledge, Jenny Smith, and Karen Eure; (third row) Alison Cobb and Paul McCarley; (back row) T. J. Kilpatrick, Lindsay Slay, and Walter Turner, director. For more information contact Bill Kirkpatrick at (601) 843-2507.

Henry E. Hight, 65, dies

Henry E. Hight, 65, a retired minister, died Dec. 12 at his home in Philadelphia. Services were held at Beacon Street Church, Philadelphia. Hight was a native of Coffeeville. Churches he pastored were Grace, Vicksburg; Beacon Street; Bethany, Slate Springs; and Mt. Carmel Union, Edinburg. He was also a Gospel magician and had presented the Gospel in magic in over eight states in the past 30 years.

Survivors include his wife Joan Hight of Philadelphia; son, Troy Lee Hight of Leeds, Ala.; daughters, Deborah Adams of Baytown, Texas, and Colleen "Dink" McDonald of

Philadelphia; sisters, Margaret Walker of Walls, Dorothy Riles of Memphis, Mildred Goudy of Horn Lake, Catherine Jackson of Byhalia, and Marie Brooks of Coffeeville; and six grandchildren.

Construction underway for JCJC's BSU Center



The concrete foundation for the 8,400 square foot BSU building on the Jones County Junior College campus, Ellisville, was recently completed. Construction supervisor, Jimmy Knight of Laurel, will be coordinating teams of volunteers to do much of the interior work. Interested individuals or church groups are asked to contact Knight at (601) 428-1366. The projected completion date for the building is August of this year. Larry Goff is BSU director.



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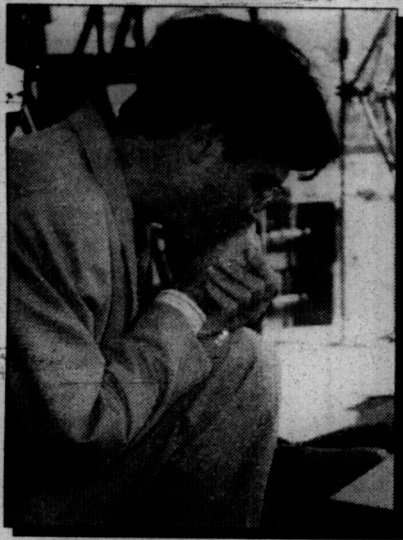
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ON MISSION — Johnny Driscoll lifts a prayer during his first volunteer trip to the South American country of Brazil in 1995.

Singer Driscoll felled Feb. 9 by heart attack

METAIRIE, La. (BP) — Johnny Driscoll, 46, a former Mississippi College student who stepped away from a New York City singing career in his 20s to minister alongside his father in New Orleans, died Feb. 9 at the outset of a personal mission trip to Brazil.

Driscoll's trip to Brazil had been disrupted by the 11-day "sickout" strike by American Airlines pilots. He was running to catch an 11:45 p.m. United Airlines flight to which he had just been assigned when he suffered a heart attack. He was pronounced dead at a nearby

hospital about 50 minutes later. He had suffered a mild heart attack in 1993 but had since been in good health, having changed his diet and continuing twice-a-week rehabilitative treatment, his mother, Helen, told Baptist Press Feb. 17.

Driscoll was associate pastor and music minister at the 2,500-member Crescent City Church, Metairie, La., in metro New Orleans, and chaplain at its 643-student Crescent City Christian School. His father, Paul, 86, founded the church as a mission in 1942 and remains its pastor. His mother founded the school

in 1956 and remains its principal.

Driscoll spent two years in Los Angeles and several years based in New York City — as a singer in Radio City Music Hall productions and then toured worldwide as a backup singer with Perry Como, whose entourage at the time included comedian Jay Leno. He also had a stint in a small role on a soap opera.

Driscoll began his pursuit of a career as a professional singer after graduating from Mississippi College in 1975 and spending a year at the Crescent City Christian School as chaplain and a music teacher.

In New York City, he had started a Bible study for Radio City Music Hall performers and had led several Rockettes to faith

in Christ. He unapologetically used Christian songs in auditioning for singing roles and, in the process, lost a number of jobs.

At the Brooklyn Tabernacle, he was active in the music program — just as he had been while in college and attending First Church, Jackson, where the minister of music is Larry Black, a former staff member at Crescent City.

Driscoll was the "headliner and had unbelievable charisma" on college choir trips to perform school assemblies in New York, Connecticut and the West Coast, Black said, adding that "he'd always give a witness" in talking with youth who crowded around him after each assembly.



LifeAnswers

Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

From my mailbag:

I was very disappointed in your advice to the woman whose husband's ex-lover had moved to their town and joined their church (LifeAnswers, Feb. 4). I thought your advice to tell the husband, "If you still want her in your life, then go with her. I release you. I will not continue sharing my life, my bed with you," was absolutely the worst advice on marriage that I have ever heard! No one should give up their mate because someone else is chasing them. They should hold their ground and just love their mate more, do more to please them, and not throw up their hands and destroy a marriage.

Thank you for your response. I was making the assumptions that there had already been prayer and Christian love extended to the ex-lover. I was not encouraging divorce by any means; I was suggesting boundaries be set. The husband needs to make a choice and not expect his wife to adjust — this is spiritual leadership and godliness. I was merely suggesting that the woman respect her position. Yes, she is still to love the husband and understand his needs and to make his needs more important than her own, but does that mean that if he

has the need for another woman in his life that she is to accept that? I do not believe that is what God had in mind when he instituted marriage.

My brother and I are adult Christians living in the same town. He is real short-tempered and will chew me out, ignore me, or not even say a word to me. What can I do?

When you two are alone for a moment, ask him why he does these things. Ask him if you have offended him, and ask his forgiveness if you have. It sounds like he is hurt about something. Ask other members of the family if they are seeing the same behavior, or if they know of any reason why he would be doing these things to you. By asking a multitude of people you will get insight that maybe you are doing something that irritates him. By all means, pray that the Lord will give you eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart to understand what is going on in this situation. I also appreciate the idea in your original letter to ask readers to pray for the people who are writing these letters. We all need to be using these opportunities to intercede in prayer for our brothers and sisters in need.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

STAFF CHANGES

First Church of Fannin, Brandon, has called Lee

Messersmith as minister of youth and education effective Jan. 3. A native of Lafayette, La., Messersmith received his education at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and Southwestern Seminary. His previous place of service was First Church, Lancaster, Texas.



Messersmith

Terry's Creek Church, Magnolia, Pike Association, has called Kent Newell as pastor effective Dec. 13. Newell is currently attending New Orleans Seminary. His previous church was New Sharon at Husser, La.

Michael W. Brown, minister of music at Mt. Vernon Church, Columbus, began serving as min-

ister of music at Alpha Church, Morristown, Tenn., on Feb. 7.

Temple Church, Pascagoula, recently called Everett Childers as pastor. Childers is a graduate of the University of Mississippi and Mid-America Seminary. He has served churches in Mississippi and Alabama.



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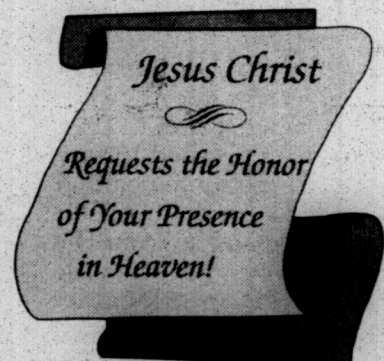
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(*I repent.*)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.
(*I believe in Jesus.*)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.
(*I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.*)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

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FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

Express hope

Titus 2:11-14; Heb. 12:26-29; Rev. 1:17-20; 11:15

By Carl M. White



White

and writes bestselling books. This guy could sell a freezer to an Eskimo. I heard Ziglar speak once, and after all of his positive talk he presented the Gospel of Jesus Christ, declaring that without Christ, even he had no hope.

The source of true hope is theological, not positive thinking. It rests in the work God did through his Son Jesus Christ on our behalf. The clearest manifestation of that hope in all of scripture is what the Bible calls "the blessed hope," or, the second coming of Christ. All three of the texts for this week's lesson center around this. In Paul's advice to Titus, he indicates that the reality of Christ is where hope comes from, and the second coming of Christ is hope's greatest expression.

The morality of hope (Heb.

The source of hope

(Titus 11:11-14). I am a positive person. The glass is not half empty, it is half full. The sky is not partly cloudy, it is partly sunny. Positivism can go a long way toward making life full and meaningful. However, there are some things you cannot positive-think your way into or out of. You cannot positive-think yourself out of a ticket if the patrolman caught you with a radar gun going 85 in a 65 mph zone.

Neither can you positive-think your way into heaven. If anyone could it would be Zig Ziglar. He is one of those positive-thinking gurus who leads conferences around the country

"Hope Floats" is the title of a popular movie starring Sandra Bullock. It is the tale of a small town's former homecoming queen who learns on national TV of her husband's affair with her best friend. Her story-book life now shattered, she has to return home, daughter in tow, and try to start over. It is the woman's mother who displays an undying optimism, commenting that given enough time, "hope floats up."

That is the world's evaluation of where hope comes from; it just floats up from a positive outlook. The Bible has a different point of view.

Obviously, the fire will instantly consume the first three, while the later three will be preserved.

The knowledge that a day is coming which will bring judgment should motivate us to build with gold, silver, and precious stones. As a matter of fact, the implication in Titus 11 is that moral living is evidence that one has true hope.

The object of hope (Rev. 1:17-20; 11:15). Ultimately, hope is something that looks ahead. The Revelation tells us what is ahead for all of God's creation. There is, perhaps, no more hopeful verse in all of scripture than the trumpet call in Rev. 11:15. It is our ultimate hope that the kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord. The object of hope is Jesus.

Hope doesn't float, it comes from God.

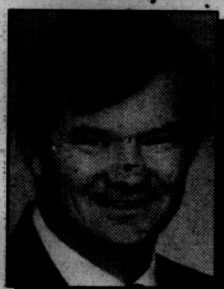
White is a member of First Church, Clinton.

LIFE AND WORK

The call to service

Mark 5:1-20; 6:6b-13, 30-31

By Hugh Plunkett



Plunkett

over evil spirits. His instructions indicated the temporary nature and the urgency of their mission. Part of their mission was to preach that people should repent. As we approach the beginning of the millennium, we have all sorts of questions. Is the Y2K phenomenon real? Will the inter-

net become the tool to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth? Will the persecution of Christians become more prevalent in our world? As Christ's followers, we should have a deep sense of urgency. We do not know the day and hour of his return, but this we do know — it's closer now than it's ever been before! As we work to bear witness, we need to realize that the hearers are responsible for their own responses.

Engage in compassionate ministry (6:13). The disciples' temporary mission also included casting out demons and

his family members what had been done for him. The man did as Jesus directed. I have a friend who was saved as a young woman. She had a great desire to be a part of an evangelistic team, but the Lord had another plan for her life. She was to be a Christian wife and mother and lead her family to Christ. It took a long time and there were discouraging moments, but, one by one, her children and then her husband came to know Christ through her quiet witness. Her dream of evangelizing the world had to start in her own, personal world.

Fulfill your mission (6:6b-12). Jesus sent out the disciples in pairs, giving them authority

In our society, one indicator of a person's success is the number of people who serve that individual. However, for some, service to people is far down the list of priorities. Many prefer to allow church staff members, church ministry groups, or secular service agencies to render service to people. Jesus calls us to serve him through witness, purposeful mission, and compassionate ministry.

Share your witness (5:18-20). Jesus had healed a demon-possessed man. As Jesus entered a boat to leave, the man asked to go with him. Jesus did not permit the man to go with him but told the man to go tell

healing sick people.

Do you remember the story of the shepherd who, upon counting his sheep, found that he had one missing? He left the ninety-nine sheep to find the one lost sheep and rejoiced when he found it.

What would have happened to the ninety-nine sheep if the shepherd had concentrated all of his efforts on the one lost sheep and not returned to care for them? They would have perished, followed a different shepherd, or wandered off.

We cannot be so zealous about evangelization that we forget about our fellow believers and their needs. We, as Christians are to minister to people's needs. In so doing we reflect Jesus' compassion for people who are hurting — both believers and non-believers.

Take time for periodic renewal (6:30-31). When the disciples returned from their mission they told Jesus about their work. Because of the

heavy traffic of people, Jesus suggested that they seek solitude and rest.

I am so blessed to serve a church that looks after my well-being even when I don't. They are genuinely concerned for my physical and emotional health. I would hope every minister would be as blessed as I am. The compassion of my people makes me want to work harder for them and deepens the love I have for them. When I do take time away from my ministry, I come back refreshed and invigorated, ready to serve. There is nothing more pitiful than a minister who is trying to encourage others and offer compassionate ministry when he himself is discouraged and feels anything but compassion due to mental and physical fatigue.

As ministers all, may we have the good sense to heed Jesus' advice to his disciples. It still holds true today!

Plunkett is minister of music and adults at Clarksdale Church.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Ultimate victory

Mark 15:1-16:20

By Dee McDermitt



McDermitt

ordered the inscription "The King of the Jews" put on Jesus' cross. It was probably not intended to mock or to honor Jesus, but was an affront to the Jewish leaders who had caused him trouble. The leaders were furious and wanted the wording changed but Pilate refused.

Three hours passed. At noontime — halfway through the six hours Jesus spent on the cross — darkness fell over the land, symbolizing God's divine judgment of those who had rejected the light of the world. At three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice. Some there thought he was calling Elijah. When translated, his words are the first line of Psalm 22. In his darkest hour, Jesus was stayed on the words of his Father in scripture. This same psalm ends in a cry of triumph.

Jesus' death (15:37-39). It's

over! The battle is won! Jesus' cry of triumph was issued from his lips and he dismissed his spirit. Considering the intense suffering he endured, it is amazing that he could emit a loud cry. This reveals that his life did not slip away, but he gave it up. At that moment, the heavy curtain in the temple which separated the holy of holies from the rest of the temple split from top to bottom. All barriers between God and man were broken and there was access to God through Jesus Christ! What an effect this had on the Roman centurion who was standing guard at the foot of the cross. He was a pagan, yet he was sobered by the realization that Jesus was the Son of God.

Jesus' burial (15:46). Joseph of Arimathea is credited with burying Jesus' body. Mark identifies him as a member of the Sanhedrin and includes that he, too, was looking for the

kingdom of God. All along he had been silent. There is no record of him raising his voice in Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin, but finally he found the courage to stand up for what he believed.

Jesus' resurrection (16:2-7). The Jews did not embalm, but anointed their bodies with fragrant spices. This was the women's intent when they came to the tomb and found the stone rolled away. They were looking for the beloved figure of the past, not understanding that that chapter had closed and they were about to walk into the new and unknown. They were filled with awe and fear at the angel's message — it is too much to grasp from this short encounter. In not many days, their anxiety would turn to joy as they realized the truth of what had happened.

McDermitt is a member of Rawls Springs Church, Hattiesburg.

This last lesson wraps up Mark's account of Jesus' life. Jesus' agonizing time of prayer in Gethsemane strengthened him for the next part of his journey. He knew that he would stand before the priests, the Sanhedrin, and Pilate and hear the crowds cry out, "Crucify him!" He knew he would feel his flesh being torn by the nails hammered into his hands and feet. But most painful of all, he knew that the Father would turn his back on him because he had become sin.

Jesus' crucifixion (15:25-26, 33-36). At nine o'clock Jesus reached Golgotha. Mark says simply "...and they crucified

him." There is no description of the agony Jesus suffered or details of the process. In fact, all of the gospel writers use language as reserved as Mark's. Sometimes there are no words to express the deepest emotions of our hearts. Some things cut so deep that we are stripped of all pretense and eloquent speech.

Mark moves on to tell of the "inscription of his accusation." It was common in crucifixion to inscribe on a board the crime for which a man was condemned and to nail it to the cross above his head. Since Pilate was convinced that Jesus was not guilty of any crime, he



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BUH IMZ XAHREIGHZ
XNRIM, JMUXUZYZH
TZKRZYZIM UP MRC
XMNKK PUI TZ
NXMNCZO.

HUCNPX IZP: ZKZYZP

Clue: T = B

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John Eight: Twenty-Eight.

Singer/writer takes on Christian music

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Imagine a world in which Christian artists have the freedom to follow their hearts and produce music that moves them, be it jazz, blues, rock, country, folk or alternative. Imagine lyrics that don't scream Christianity, but softly suggest God's message by examining troubling life situations.

Imagine an audience that goes beyond predictable and into the astonishing, addressing pre-teens and retirees; non-believers and Christians; working class and wealthy elite. Imagine a God who allows musicians to serve as missionaries, telling "redemptive stories that are complex, and sometimes messy because they involve human failure and God's intervention."

Christian singer, composer, performer, and record producer Charlie Peacock imagines all this in his new Broadman & Holman book, "At the Crossroads: An Insider's Look at the Past, Present, and Future of Contemporary Christian Music."

A key part of the book "is about being faithful to your music and being faithful to God," said Peacock, who is on mission to shake up the contemporary Christian music (CCM) industry and get those involved in it to think about its direction.

Broadman & Holman President Ken Stephens said the publisher had been looking for an author who would examine the contemporary Christian music business, but not on a confrontational level.

"Charlie not only gently confronts the issues, but he gives constructive spiritual counsel to those involved in the [CCM] business and to those looking to reconcile expressions of faith in the arts."

Peacock's two main beefs with the contemporary Christian music industry deal with lyrics and crossover, or moving Christian music into the secular community.

He wonders why CCM requires Christian lyrics to be so "positive and nice and helpful and friendly."

"That sounds like a description of the Ace hardware man," he quipped.

Peacock believes CCM — a \$500 million-a-year industry — falls prey to modern marketing ideology. It offers the

audience what it is most comfortable with, not necessarily what it needs. Moreover, he said, it's marketed to Christians, not non-believers.

Peacock said he doesn't believe Christian music should be labeled Christian at all. Taking the label off the music would force Christians to decide "on their own" whether the music carried a godly message.

The type of Christian music Peacock writes, produces, and advocates involves thought-provoking lyrics not usually found in popular contemporary Christian music, he said.

"Some of this language rolls off the average Christian listener like water off a duck. It just doesn't stick because they are waiting for certain words to tell them they are listening to Christian music."

"We put our music out there in this whole big world of people who don't want to be challenged."

One of the tensions in CCM, Peacock said, is "that there is a group of artists

who want to sing about all of life and there is another group who really want to keep it limited to religious lingo."

When music is required to conform to the rigid standards of the CCM ministry, both music and the gospel are compromised and trivialized, he said.

A musician's calling "does not have to be tethered to ministry in order to be ordained of God."



CASTING A VISION — Christian singer, composer, performer, and record producer Charlie Peacock performs during the Christian Booksellers Association Expo recently in Nashville. (BP photo by Donald Fuller)

Okla. church sports unusual greeting — a hug

ELGIN, Okla. (BP) — People attending church on Sunday mornings typically are welcomed by men and women who offer a word of greeting, a handshake, and a copy of the church bulletin.

At this 8:30 a.m. service, however, worshipers are likely to receive a warm hug and

radiant smile from a young lady who has a special knack for making people feel at home at First Church, Elgin, Okla.

Seven-year-old Tori Wright hasn't been formally trained to be a greeter. She just has the love of the Lord in her heart and a natural outgoing personality.

For a few months now, Tori has greeted worshipers who attend the early service, including many of the church's older members who prefer the service's traditional style over the 10:40 a.m. service's more contemporary format.

Joined by head usher Mark Deever, also the church treasurer, and another adult greeter, Tori has "really changed the atmosphere" of the early morning service, Lamle said. "She's just an outgoing, really pleasant little girl," he said. "She has a very cute smile and I think she likes just about everybody."

Tori was encouraged to become a greeter by Deever, who has served in that capacity for some time. She was already at church for the early services because her mother, Tonya, runs the sound system and her grandfather, Raymond Huggins, is a regular attendee.

"Tori has always kind of clung to me and we became close friends," Deever said. "One day as we were standing there, I told her, 'Tori, why don't you take some of these bulletins and hand them out to the folks as they arrive and shake their hands?'"

"I tell you what, instead of shaking their hands, she gave them a hug!"

"With her out there, it's just something special," Deever continued. "She brings out the

best in those seniors. They enjoy the hug and attention she gives them. She has awakened a spark in some of those folks."

Tori's welcome is especially meaningful to visitors, although they are usually few in number at that time of day. "I think it impresses the few guests we do get," Deever said. "It strikes them as being unique and heartwarming that we have some young people who are eager to meet them. It's obvious that she has a passion for greeting and meeting people and making them feel comfortable. Her gift is hospitality, for sure."

Tori especially likes the senior adults. "I like the older people because they are really nice to me," she said. "I see one lady at the grocery store during the week sometimes, and she always tells me one of the reasons she likes to go to church is just to see me and for me to greet her. That makes me feel very good, and to feel needed."

Saved at Vacation Bible School when she was 6, Tori is faithful to complete her sermon notes sheet each week in the worship service. She is very diligent about filling in each blank and enjoys listening to Lamle talk about her Savior.

"When it's over, I take my sheet to the pastor's office and he gives me some candy," she said.

WILDERNESS MENU

Exodus 16

The Israelites needed food while they traveled to Canaan. God sent manna.

Look up the verses in your Bible to find some manna facts. Write the answers on the lines below.

1. M
2. A
3. N
4. N
5. A

1. How much manna was each person to gather? (v. 16)
2. How long did the Israelites eat manna? (v. 35)
3. What did God call the manna? (v. 4)
4. What did manna taste like? (v. 31)
5. What else did the Israelites get to eat every day? (v. 13)



Source: Ready-To-Use Bible Activity Sheets, by Nellie deVries published by Baker Books, September 1997